



# MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

## Transition Toolkit

The Transition section of the Advising Toolkit has been created to aid educators as they prepare students as they transition **from middle school to high school**. The Transition part of the Toolkit includes unique transition activities for this transition

The Transition activities have also been divided into three sections: 1) the spring **BEFORE** the transition year, 2) the **BEGINNING** of the transition year, and finally 3) transition activities **THROUGHOUT** the transition year.

Included in these sections are Transition Resource lists for educators and well as Transition Resource lists for parents.

<b>Transition Activities from Middle School to High School</b>
<b>BEFORE High School</b>
<a href="#">Student Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Student and Family Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Parent Transition Activities</a>
<b>START of School Year</b>
<a href="#">Student Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Parent Transition Activities</a>
<b>DURING the School Year</b>
<a href="#">Student Transition Activities</a>
<a href="#">Student and Family Transition Activities</a>



# ***Spring & Summer BEFORE 9<sup>TH</sup> Grade***

[For Students](#)

[For Students & Families](#)

[For Parents](#)



# TRANSITION TOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



# Welcome Aboard

**Audience:** 8<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Year (Spring)

## Overview:

Expanded social experiences in high school represent a new opportunity for students, especially those who may have experienced exclusion in middle school. Students in high school have the potential to establish new social networks that did not exist in their middle schools. Providing multiple opportunities for rising freshmen to interact with high school students is one way to assist new students in establishing social supports and relationships.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Consider scheduling the following opportunities:

- Invite middle level students to attend designated high school sporting events, plays or concerts and reserve seats for them
- Schedule a speaker/program that would be of interest to both middle level students as well as current high school students and invite the upcoming students to attend
- Assigning long-term projects for pairs or small groups from both schools
- Assign a project that pairs small groups of eighth graders with high school student groups
- Organize joint extra-curricular opportunities for middle level and high school student such as club projects or service learning opportunities.
- Create cross grade school “teams” to play virtual games such as chess, hang-man or scrabble
- Host a high school dance and invite upcoming freshmen as special guests.

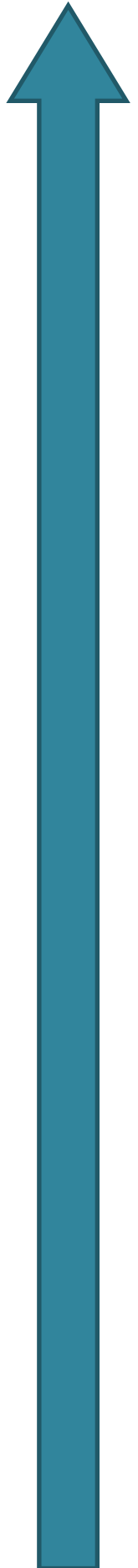
## Things to Consider:

Experiences that bring middle school and high school students together need careful planning and monitoring to produce optimum benefit for both groups.

These experiences can be facilitated by school staff, parent volunteers or education majors from a local college

## Resources:

[Transition from Middle to High](#)





# Let me tell you what it takes

**Audience:** Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade & Summer before 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Developing and sustaining a mentor program for students entering the high school can create a sense of belonging for new students even before they begin attending. A culture of support and acceptance can set the stage for not only the beginning of the transition but throughout the high school years.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

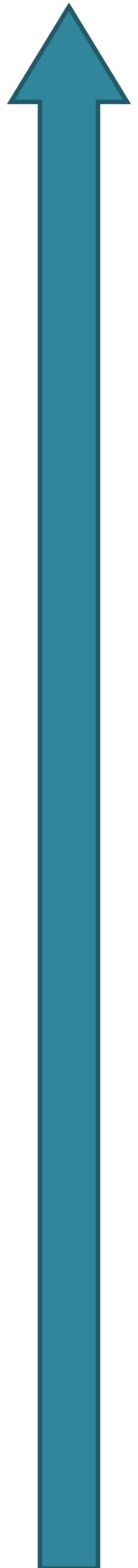
- Recruit current upper classmen to serve as mentors to current middle grades students who will be attending the high school the next year.
- The compatibility of mentor and mentee is a factor that should be taken into consideration when arranging pairs. Mentors and mentees may benefit from having similar backgrounds, interests and life experiences:
  - Match students with similar extra-curricular interests: sports, drama, music, 4-H etc.
  - Match mentees who are struggling academically with mentors who have success in particular content areas.
- Any one or a combination of the following models is possible:
  - E- mentoring programs that are conducted through email or on a blog.
  - Tutoring programs in which older students provide extra academic help to struggling students to better prepare them for the rigors of high school
  - Big Brother/Big Sister formats in which older students provide guidance for concerns new students may have regarding fitting in at the high school.

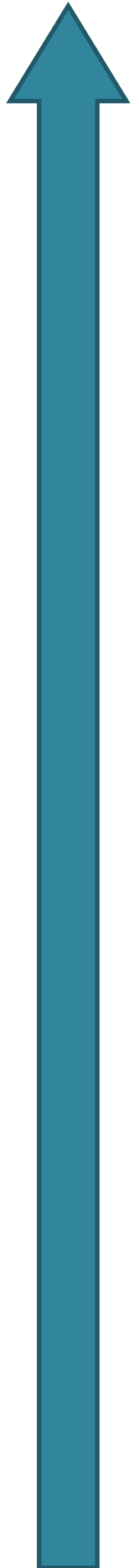
## Things to Consider:

- It is important to establish the goals for the mentoring program and provide training to mentors prior to beginning. Training should include guidelines for topics to be discussed.
- Mentors should meet regularly with a staff sponsor and receive on-going guidance.
- Any correspondence between mentors and mentees should be reviewed prior to being sent to ensure appropriateness of content.

## Resources:

- [How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program](#)
- [EKU and GEAR UP E-Mentoring](#)
- [Standards of Conduct for Mentors](#)





# The Summer Slide

**Audience:** Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** Summer before 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

During a government web cast (2009), Secretary of Education Arne Duncan described summer learning loss as “devastating.” This is what researchers have often referred to as the “summer slide.” Researchers conclude that two-thirds of the 9th grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years, with nearly one-third of the gap present when children begin school (Alexander, Entwistle & Olsen, 2007). To avoid the “Summer Slide” consider assigning reading selections to transitioning freshmen.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

The following recommendations are a compilation of research on what some high schools are doing:

- Make arrangements for the school library or local public library (preferably on a book mobile) to assure that multiple copies of recommended readings are available to students of low-income and other disadvantaged families.
- Send a letter (snail mail or email) to all transitioning freshman students explaining the summer reading program and any related assignments.
- Connect the reading assignment to class work that will be covered in content areas in the fall.
- Coordinate with the local library to establish a teen reading club aligned with the school’s summer reading list. Library facilitators can conduct book discussions and related activities.

## Things to Consider:

- Ideally the selections would be tied either to students’ career and college goals as identified through the ILP or to fall curriculum.
- Related assignments could lead students to make connections between the reading and their education.
- Further connections can be made by arranging for speakers or organizing field trips that extend learning throughout the school year.

## Resources:

- [Sample Summer Reading Letter](#)
- [Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap](#)



# Welcome Home

**When:** Summer before 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Audience:** Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

## Overview:

Research has shown that students are full of fears for their first day of high school. Middle school students have anxiety about high school wondering how stringent the rules are, how difficult the work is, and how other students will accept them. Help alleviate the fears of students and parents by planning an Open House event or a Preview Night prior to the start of the new school year and remind them that this school is their new home away from home during these very important years.

- Host a back to School Night for the parents and upcoming freshman students. Allow parents and students to walk the halls and find their way through the course schedule in the physical building. Provide opportunities for parents and students to meet teachers. In the common area of the school, clubs, organizations and sports teams could set up information tables to promote their activities. Encourage students and parents to get involved.
- Host small, more informal events on several different days, or a combination of day and evening hours prior to the opening day of school. Having more than one day set aside for events would allow more parents to participate. During this time parents could bring their students in, pick up a copy of the student's schedule and locate all of the classrooms, and find the student's locker and practice the combination. Consider having the cafeteria open for parents and students to purchase snacks providing students an opportunity to become accustomed to lunch lines and procedures.
- Host a family game or reading night, or even a family movie night before school begins and invite incoming freshmen and their families. Often the only time parents see the inside of the high school is for a parent conference or when one of their children gets into trouble. Find ways to invite families into the school so that they understand their value in learning.

## Things to Consider:

- Provide space for parent organizations to set up information tables as a way to encourage parents to get involved at the school.
- Consider having upper classroom produce a virtual tour of the high school and post it on your website so that students who cannot attend Open House can view.

## Resources:

[Freshman Orientation Video](#)

[How to Survive High School Orientation](#)



# Tell me all about it

**Audience:** Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** Summer before 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

Select or solicit volunteers from rising sophomores to produce a video to be shared with the next group of transitioning students. Students would know what questions or concerns the next group of entering students might have and what they would be most interested in hearing about and seeing. This could point out concerns or issues that students are still dealing with in terms of their own transition.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

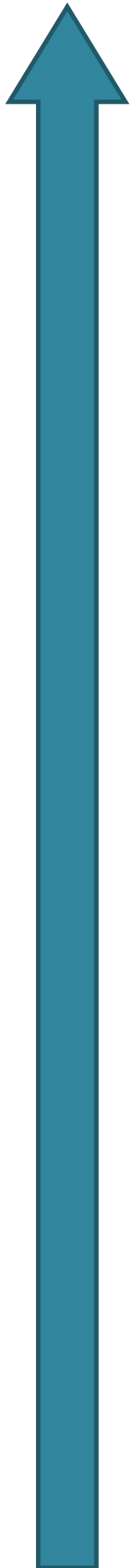
- Decide whether the video will be created through an after school club or during a school exploratory class or club
- Solicit a staff member, parent or community member (e.g., college or university staff, local cable television staff, district technology coordinator) who has video experience and would be willing to assist
- Allow students to help determine the content of the video. It might include:
  - Shot of the entrance to the school and the name sign
  - Principal giving opening/welcoming remarks
  - Interviews with school staff and students
  - Clips of classrooms, both academic and exploratory/enrichment classes
  - Shots of extracurricular activities (e.g., ballgames, music concerts, academic competition)
  - Shots of the lunchroom, gym, offices, media center, and any special outside areas
  - Clips of students using lockers, loading and unloading buses, and during class change
- Use the video when meeting with the next group of students to enter the high school, at summer transition camps, with parents, and at open houses
- Check with the local cable television station to see if they might air this video
- Upload the video to the school's website.

## Things to Consider:

- Be sure that the group provides a true mix of students so that all perspectives are addressed.
- The production of this video could be a project within a career education class.
- The video could be posted to the school web site.
- If the equipment or adult expertise does not exist for a video, have students create a PowerPoint that would address the same points as the video and that could be used in the same way.

## Resources:

- [Videomaker.com](http://Videomaker.com)







**TRANSITION TOOLS FOR  
HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS & FAMILIES**



# Total Access

**Audience:** Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

## Overview:

High school websites can be storehouses of information for students and families. Provide web addresses, including passwords if applicable, to families and students who will be transitioning to the high school. This will allow the families the opportunity to become familiar with your site before they rely on it as a main source of information.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Possible items for including on the website:

- **Teacher Pages-** teachers can host their own page on the high school website where they post classroom calendars with project and assignment due dates, homework activities, project descriptions, classroom rules/procedures and contact information. Email links could also be provided
- **Lunch Menu-** students are often used to having lunch menus sent home by the school for parents to reference and/or help plan meals for their students. If the menu is on the website, parents can assist freshman students with lunch planning
- **Club/Sport/Activity Pages-** clubs and sports groups could have their own web page to post practice and game schedules, activity schedules, mission and vision statements, upcoming field trip information, club rules, etc.
- **School Handbook-** Post the school handbook on the website to make it more accessible to parents and students. Handbooks are generally sent home with students at the beginning of the year, but students often misplace them and can no longer refer to them when they have questions
- **Blogs-**include family and student blogs or discussion areas for new students and their families. Ask current parents and students to participate in the blog to respond to questions and concerns voiced by the families of or the upcoming students themselves.

## Things to Consider:

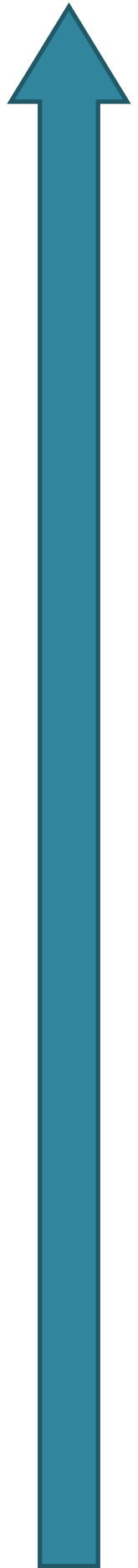
- Websites can often be difficult to navigate, however, to ensure that your school website is user friendly, consider self-explanatory menu items to help even novice computer surfers find their way around your site.
- To encourage upcoming students and parents to use the website and become familiar with its contents, consider an online trivia contest where school memorabilia is the grand prize.

## Resources:

[Greenwood High School](#)

[Adair Co. High School](#)

[Carroll Co. High School](#)





# **TRANSITION TOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS**



# Dive Right In

**When:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (Spring)

**Audience:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents

## Overview:

The PTA/PTO can be a great avenue for schools to use to help get parents involved in the school setting. Research shows that when parents are involved in their child's education, those students generally have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and more consistently completed homework.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Ask the PTA/PTO to host events such as the following for incoming families and students:

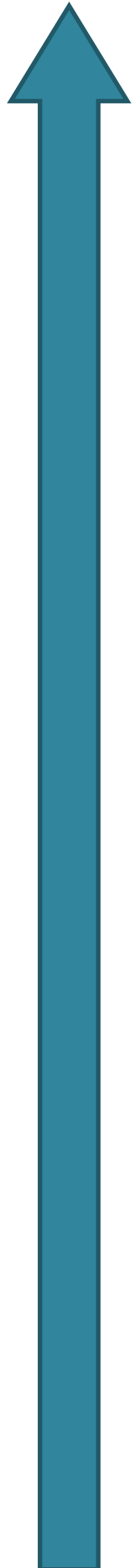
- Family Dinner, perhaps a pot luck mixer– with a focus on how parents can best help their students succeed in high school. –Have a panel of parents of current students share their experiences and respond to questions of attendees. Have a panel of older students meet with the incoming students to share tips on how to be a successful student
- Picnic with activities such as corn hole or horse shoe tournaments. The focus would be on building relationships with parents of rising high school students. Parents of students who are graduating could share their success stories and ideas on how to assist incoming high school students to succeed
- Family ice cream social. In addition to enjoying some tasty ice cream, parents can gather information about how they can help their students in their coming years of high school and students
- Family fun night where the focus is on “fun raising” not “fundraising.” Food, games and a time to mingle and socialize would be the focus of the event

## Things to Consider:

Many factors contribute to a decrease in family involvement in high school. In order to maintain open communication schools must use a variety of settings to encourage parents to stay involved.

## Resources:

- [PTO Today](#)
- [KY PTA](#)





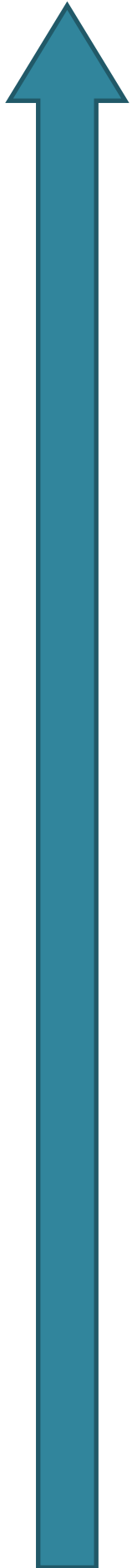
# TRANSITIONING INTO HIGH SCHOOL

***9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)***

[For Students](#)  
[For Parents](#)



# TRANSITION TOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



# Planning your future- using the ILP

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

Freshmen year is pivotal for college and career planning. Setting aside time for using the ILP should occur often throughout the year. These sessions could be included in core content classrooms or as a component of an elective class.

## Procedure/ Guidelines:

Explain to students that the ILP will help them to plan their coursework and activities as they complete their high school education, prepare for post-secondary education and develop career plans. The document, ILP Classroom Activities, provides guidance for these components:

1. Getting Started with Your ILP
2. Saving Your Career Matchmaker Results
3. Careers That Interest Me
4. Schools That Interest Me
5. Career & Life Goals
6. Career Cluster Interests
7. Post-Secondary Goals
8. Career Planning Activities
9. Activities & Interests
10. Community Service and Work Experience
11. Awards & Recognitions
12. High School Education Plan
13. Learning Services
14. Using the Resume Builder

## Things to Consider:

- Share the completion standards (link below) with students to ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements for each year of high school.
- Document ways that students use the ILP that are innovative or unique, so that you can incorporate those ideas with future students.

## Resources:

- [CareerCruising.com](http://CareerCruising.com)
- [ILP Classroom Activities](#)
- [Components of the Student ILP](#)
- [ILP Completion Standards](#)



# End the Guessing Game

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

Middle school academics are very different from high school academics. It takes students a while to understand that grades are linked to credits and credits must be earned in order to advance through the grade levels and ultimately graduate. With a bit of preparation, students can have an understanding of the academic expectations and better meet these challenges.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Almost every high school teacher hands out a syllabus and spends the first day of school going over it. By the time students get home that evening, most will admit that the entire day has become one big blur of unclear expectations. Teachers should consider presenting their classroom routines and expectations in a more engaging way.

- Ask teachers to provide a PowerPoint presentation or video that could be e-mailed to parents or posted to teacher web pages. This presentation should address procedures and expectations for the class. Parents and students could view this together at home. The presentation might also include background information about the teacher and a welcoming introduction to the class.
- Place a hidden message in the syllabus and give the first student finding the message a prize.
- Add graphics to the syllabus and print it on colored or decorative paper to make it more interesting and eye-appealing.
- Have students pair up and do a scavenger hunt activity using the syllabus.
- Show a video prepared by students from the previous year. In the video students could provide tips on how to be successful in the class. It could also include a part by the teacher addressing other necessary information.

## Things to Consider:

- High school teachers often complain that students are unable to meet reasonable expectations. Truth be known, many students are simply unsure about what the expectations are. Teachers need to be sure to set their expectations clearly and communicate these to students and parents.
- Modeling is a great tool for students and it helps them understand the level of effort and commitment needed on their part to be successful.

## Links:

- [Sample Syllabus](#)





# Making Connections

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

High schools are typically larger, less personal and more departmentalized than middle and elementary schools. As a result, students often feel disconnected and somewhat lost. Recent research of students who dropped out of school without graduating shows that almost half reported doing so because they were bored or disengaged from the high school. It is very easy for ninth graders especially to get lost and to not feel connected to their new school.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

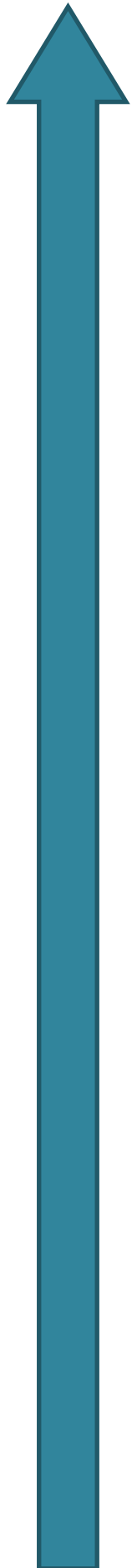
- Ask all of the school teams, clubs, and organizations to decorate the cafeteria walls with banners, posters, and other paraphernalia representative of their group and showing what the group does.
- Schedule a time (e.g., at lunch, one hour during the day, early arrival time and homeroom) for representatives of the various school clubs, organizations, teams, and special activities to set up booths and allow freshman students to visit and gather information.
- Identify places for posting meeting announcements for all groups (e.g., hall bulletin board, location on school web site, school announcements).
- Utilize ILP "Hobbies and Interests" data to determine extr-curricular interests of freshman. Look for unrepresented areas to address that would help more students be connected to the school.
- Find out which students are not participating in school organizations and identify a mentor (either school staff or community members) for these students to provide them with a stronger connection to the school.

## Things to Consider:

After a first meeting, mentors could meet with their mentees electronically. Having e-mail communications could increase the amount of contact for students with their mentors. However, students may need school time for doing this.

## Resources:

- [Easing the Transition to High School](#)





# Planning your future- using the ILP

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

**When:** 9th Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

Freshmen year is pivotal for college and career planning. Setting aside time for using the ILP should occur often throughout the year. These sessions could be included in core content classrooms or as a component of an elective class.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Explain to students that the ILP will help them to plan their coursework and activities as they complete their high school education, prepare for post-secondary education and develop career plans. The document, ILP Classroom Activities, provides guidance for these components:

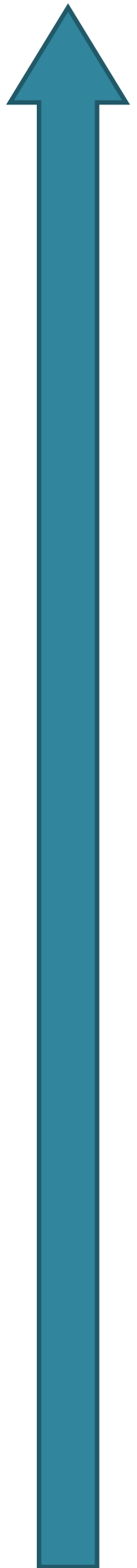
- Getting Started with Your ILP
- Saving Your Career Matchmaker Results
- Careers That Interest Me
- Schools That Interest Me
- Career & Life Goals
- Career Cluster Interests
- Post-Secondary Goals
- Career Planning Activities
- Activities & Interests
- Community Service and Work Experience
- Awards & Recognitions
- High School Education Plan
- Learning Services
- Using the Resume Builder

## Things to Consider:

- Share the completion standards (link below) with students to ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements for each year of high school.
- Document ways that students use the ILP that are innovative or unique, so that you can incorporate those ideas with future students.

## Resources:

- [CareerCruising.com](http://CareerCruising.com)
- [ILP Classroom Activities](#)
- [Components of the Student ILP](#)
- [ILP Completion Standards](#)





# Finding My Way

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

Recent research of students who dropped out of school without graduating shows that almost half reported doing so because they were bored or disengaged from the high school. High schools are typically larger, less personal more departmentalized than middle or elementary schools. As a result, students often feel disconnected and lost in the ensuing shuffle. It is very easy for ninth graders especially to get lost in the shuffle and fail their course work without timely intervention.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

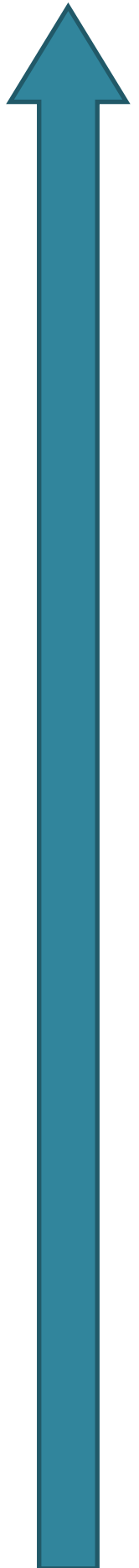
- Develop a school wide advisory program for ninth grade students to help them with their high school transition. Assign faculty and staff small groups of students to meet with at least once a week to discuss transition issues and to monitor students' academic progress suggesting appropriate interventions.
- Establish a mentoring program to provide more care and attention for targeted students using school staff, community members, and/or business representatives. Use early dropout prediction data, such as absenteeism, history of failure, discipline referral record, and unstable home environment to create a list of potential dropouts. Mentors would be one person that students could go to if they had a question or concern.
- Administer the learning style inventory in the ILP. If your school has a homeroom or an advising period, consider administering the learning style inventory during this time and share the results with the faculty. Knowing students' predominant learning style could help teachers group students for projects, and determine appropriate interventions when students are having trouble.

## Things to Consider:

- Research has shown that the single most important factor for student success is relationships with adults in their academic environment.
- Activities such as this one help to build those relationships and help teachers connect with students

## Resources:

- [Better High Schools](#)





# **TRANSITION TOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS**



# When I grow up

**Audience:** Parents of 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

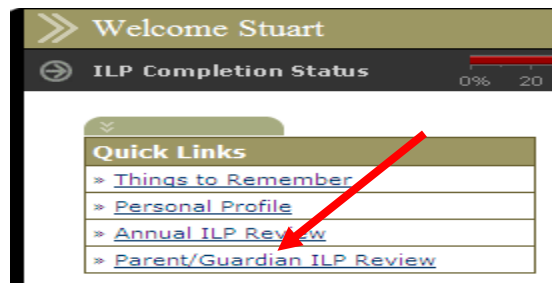
**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

The above question is often asked of students. The ILP facilitates how they answer this question and provides resources so that they can make informed decisions about their future. Parents are in integral part of that process, so keeping them engaged in the ILP process is of benefit to everyone. Hosting an “ILP Night” or providing information at a related parent meeting will ensure that parents are fully aware of their students’ plans and can provide information for important conversations.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

- Briefly review the components of the ILP projected on a screen so that all can see. Highlight Career Matchmaker, Assessment Results, Resume Builder, Schools, Financial Aid Selector and the Employment section.
- Provide parents with their usernames and passwords to their students’ ILPs.
- Assist parents as they log-on and review their students’ ILPs. B
- Be sure to have parents click on Parent/Guardian ILP Review and then answer “Yes, I have reviewed my child’s ILP”



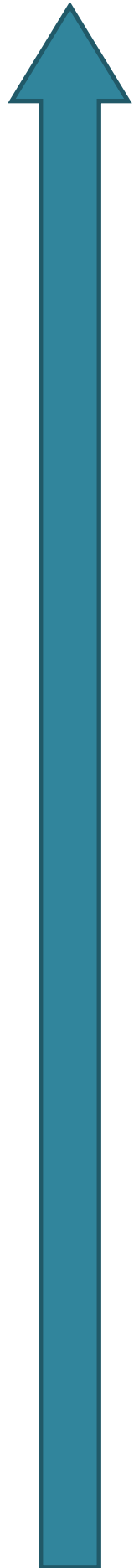
- Advertise these events through the newspaper, school website, notes home to parents, etc.
- If possible, solicit donations from area vendors to present parents with gift cards or donated items as a “thank-you” for attending. Include this information in any announcements about the meeting.

## Things to Consider:

Share the completion standards (link below) with parent to ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements for each year of high school. Inform parents that ILP completion is a high school graduation requirement as referenced in 704 KAR 3:305 Regulation.

## Resources:

- [Access ILP Here](#)
- [Components of the student ILP](#)
- [ILP Completion Standards](#)



# Raising the Bar

**Audience:** Parents of 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

The transition from middle grades to high school is often very confusing for incoming freshman. Grades, course selection and credits are either new concepts completely, or take on an entirely new meaning on the high school level. Parents and students are often unaware of the benefits of accelerated learning opportunities.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Help parents and students make the connection from the high school coursework to the resulting college level coursework that student will take once he or she enters college (or dual credit courses in their last two years of high school).

- Host an Accelerated Learning Opportunities Rally and/or a College Fair. During this event, a quick overview of the latest research can be presented to parents and students. Counselors or teachers can share accelerated learning course offerings (AP, Dual Credit, IB, etc.) and students who have taken the courses can share their experiences. Local college staff can attend and be called upon to discuss the colleges' approach to the various accelerated learning opportunities and how the college uses these credits in admission and placement decisions. The colleges could set up informational booths for parents and students to ask questions and learn more about the college opportunities.
- Students currently enrolled in accelerated courses could visit younger students and talk with upcoming middle school students about high school course offerings and the benefits of taking advantage of such opportunities.
- Counselors and teachers can take the opportunity to sit down with students individually and/or with parents and go over EPAS EXPLORE scores. Explaining the benchmark goals and helping plot a course of action to keep students on, or above target, is a great way to help students and parents see the connection between college and career readiness, high school grades, and high school coursework.

## Things to Consider:

Students and parents are unaware of the research that shows that what courses a student takes often has direct correlation with that student's ACT score and which college and what college courses they will need to take as a result.

## Resources:

- [ACT: Planning Your Future](#)



# In a Million Words or Less

**Audience:** Parents of 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Start of Year)

## Overview:

Teachers often begin the school year with a parent letter in which they introduce themselves and provide an overview of the school year. These parent letters are wonderful sources of information and teachers often agonize over the design and content of the letters for weeks before they actually send them home to parents. This transition activity involves a letter from parents, to the teachers, about the students.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Parents are the experts on their children. They know their children's personalities, quirks, successes and failures. This activity involves a homework assignment for the first week of school- only it is to be completed by the student's parent or guardian, not by the student themselves.

- The actual activity can be worded like this: You know so much more about your own child than I know about them at this moment. As we are going to be on a year-long journey together, and part of my job it so help prepare your child for the future you want them to have. It helps when I know more about your child's likes and dislikes, their personality and tendencies, and their past successes and failures. In a million words or less, tell me all about your child.
- You can alter the title and try, "In five hundred words or less..." if you want to make the task less daunting to parents

## Things to Consider:

Research has shown that the single most important factor for student success is relationships with adults in their academic environment. Activities such as this one help to build those relationships and help teachers connect with students.



# TRANSITIONING INTO HIGH SCHOOL

*9<sup>th</sup> Grade*  
*(During the Year)*

[For Students](#)  
[For Students & Families](#)





# TRANSITION TOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



# Looping for Success

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

## Overview:

Looping, also known as multi-year placement, is a process by which students remain in “teams” with their peers and their teacher through several years of their school experience. Looping has been a popular technique for elementary and even some middle schools for several years, but this teamed approach is slowly taking in root in high school classes as well.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

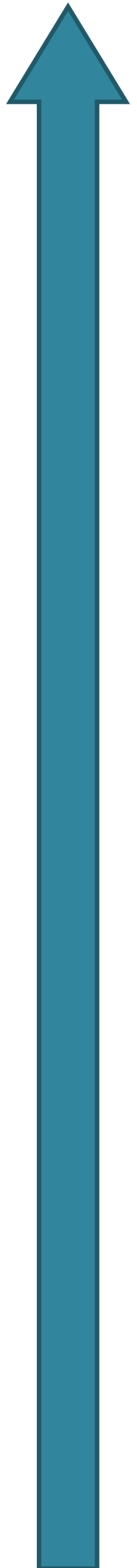
- Looping allows teachers to focus on student skills levels and student academic growth, and not necessarily on grade-level curricular boundaries. Teachers in looped classrooms have the freedom to accelerate the curriculum as they need to in order to stay on pace with student learning.
- Looping helps alleviate the beginning of the year “drag” where students are trying to become familiar with the expectations and routines of a new teacher and teachers are trying to quickly assess the aptitude of a new set of pupils. Learning can begin on day one of the school year.
- Many professionals will dismiss looping as a scenario not possible in high school. While it is inconceivable that all students can be looped for all classes, it is possible to loop some of the core classes. A student, for instance, can have the same English/Language Arts teacher for several years, or the same Social Studies teacher for several years.

## Things to Consider:

Allowing students to build on friendships and relationships with teachers over several years can allow for significant academic and social growth. Students will benefit from the consistent nature of knowing the teacher and knowing the expectations for the course. Teachers can benefit because there is already a relationship in place with the student and the student’s parents.

## Resources:

- [A Dozen Promising Practices](#)
- [Looping](#)





# Shadowing through the Dark

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

## Overview:

Student to student mentoring is a concept that is rapidly catching on across the United States. Research studies have shown that students with a mentor are 53% less likely to skip school, 37% less likely to skip classes, 33% less likely to hit someone and 59% more likely to improve their grades. High school students are also much more likely to listen to their peers- students their own age who have been through the very experiences they are facing.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

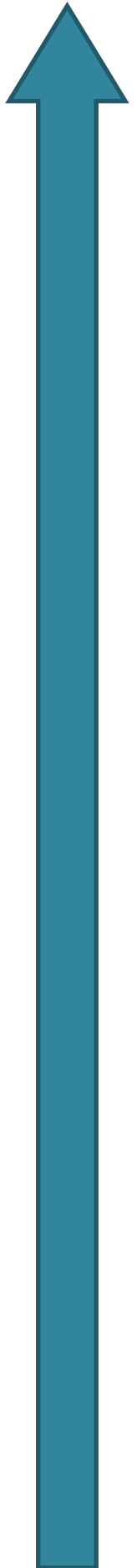
- Consider utilizing your National Honor Society students as peer mentors. These students are being trained in leadership skills and should have both the academic skills and the social skills to support freshman students.
- Consider making the program voluntary. No freshman student is going to want to be forced to have a mentor buddy, but some may really want this opportunity and will take advantage of it when presented with the option.
- Have older students assist younger students in becoming familiar with the school building as well as the school environment. This mentorship could begin the week before school officially starts, so that younger students are less fearful of that first day of school.
- Peer mentors will need training on how to be an effective leader to their mentee. Without training, mentors will be unsure of their role and their responsibilities.

## Things to Consider:

Peer mentoring can be a wonderful opportunity for freshman students to have a “seasoned” peer walk them through the school building and talk to them about the importance of class work and being involved in extracurricular activities. Well screened peer mentors can be a first line of defense for freshman students who are often unsure and confused about the myriad of choices they face.

## Resources:

- [A Dozen Promising Practices](#)
- [Peer Mentoring Resource Book](#)
- [Mentoring Directory](#)
- [Mentor/Mentee Training Materials](#)





# Spreading your Wings

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

## Overview:

Providing information about possible volunteering, job shadowing opportunities in the community can help freshman students make a personal connection and feel a sense of belonging. Ideally, these experiences should be aligned with the students' Career Matchmaker results and cluster recommendations in their ILPs.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

Walk students through the following process to identify an appropriate experience:

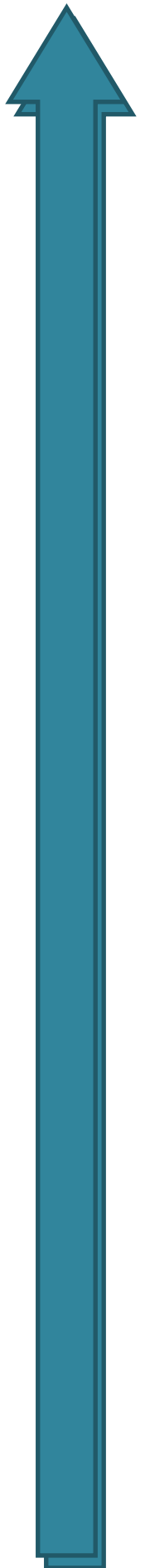
- Have students complete the Career Matchmaker assessment, review the suggested careers, and then select 3 careers that they are interested in researching further.
- Ask students to click on those 3 careers to see how their responses in Career Matchmaker align with the tasks associated with that career.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss the following questions: (If possible group them by similar careers)
  - What aspects of the job do you like/dislike?
  - What volunteer opportunities might be available to provide experience in exploring this career? (if in the computer lab have students complete the volunteer exploration form).
- As a follow-up exercise students have go to the "Sidewalk to the future" website and create a sidewalk square illustrating their interests, skills and goals. When students have completed their squares ask them to share their square with a partner. Then have students share a key point about their partner's square with the class.

## Things to Consider:

- Invite community members to speak about related careers.
- Possibly have students complete applications and conduct mock interviews.
- Guest speakers could provide feedback on applications and interviews.

## Resources:

- [Volunteering in Kentucky](#)
- [Do Something](#)
- [Sidewalk to the Future](#)
- [Teenagers Guide to the Real World](#)
- [Volunteer Exploration Form](#)





# Chalking up Points

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

## Overview:

Whether for a graduation requirement, to earn National Honor Society points or simply to be helpful, volunteering brings many benefits to the lives of adolescents. Ideally, the volunteering experience should be aligned with the students' Career Matchmaker results in their ILPs.

## Procedures/Guidelines:

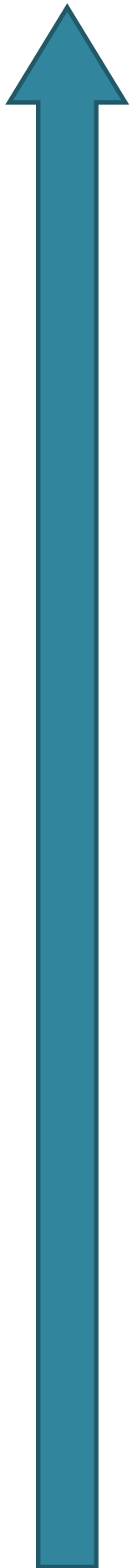
- Use the following checklist (adapted from *21 "To Do" Lists for High School* by: Valerie Pierce and Cheryl Rilly) to guide students through the volunteering process:
- Call professional organizations and associations related to your interests to see if they need volunteers or could suggest a volunteer position.
- Click on websites for ideas.
- Check the school bulletin board or check with your counselor to see what service possibilities exist through your school.
- Ask your friends where they plan to volunteer.
- Check the web sites of local newspapers and television stations for lists of volunteer activities and events. Watch for stories on interesting charity events. Call the sponsoring agency and ask if you can volunteer.
- Call the local sports teams to see if they're sponsoring youth events. Ask if you can volunteer.
- Check with your place of worship. Can you teach Sunday school? Babysit? Volunteer at church events? Do they sponsor mission work?
- Turn your interests into volunteer work. If you take extracurricular classes (i.e. dance, music), ask the instructor if they need help.
- Start your own volunteer group for a cause or need that you are passionate about.
- Find out what careers are related to volunteer situations.
- Find out if your volunteer position can turn into a summer job or internship.
- Ask your counselor if your school has a program that gives high school credit for community service hours.
- **DOCUMENT** any volunteer time in your ILP. Ask contacts at the agencies to write letters of reference that you can upload to the My Documents section of your ILP.

## Things to Consider:

- Provide time for students to document their volunteering experiences in their ILPs. First click on "Activities and Experiences" and then click on "Community Service".
- Provide links to local community service opportunities on your school webpage. (sample below)

## Resources:

[Volunteering in Kentucky](#)  
[Community Service Ideas](#)





# **TRANSITION TOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS & FAMILIES**



# Student Led Conferences

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students & Families

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

## Overview:

Student led conferences move the student from passive to an active participant in a 3-way interaction among parent, teacher, and student. Students assume “equal partner” status in discussions concerning their academic progress. One EXTREMELY important characteristic remains constant: The student leads the discussion. In participating in this process, students can improve oral communication skills and gain self-confidence. Teachers who frequently use this model report that the parent and teacher bonds are strengthened. Both teacher and parent are more likely to initiate subsequent contacts throughout the remainder of the school year.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

Consider the following strategies when conducting student led conferences:

- The teacher should create a welcoming atmosphere (e.g. greet at the door with a smile and a hand shake, make eye contact). Set the tone with a positive comment about the student.
- The teacher should arrange to conduct conferences at a designated area, preferably in the classroom with comfortable seating. Provide adult seating so parents are not uncomfortable. Student led conferences should help prevent parents from having childhood memories of school trauma.
- Students should review their ILP with their parents and discuss strengths, interests and goals. Prepare students in advance to highlight the accomplishments they have documented in their ILP. This is also a good time to discuss the student’s educational plan.
- Allow the parents the opportunity to ask questions or set up an additional conference time, if the need is felt by either the teacher or the parents.

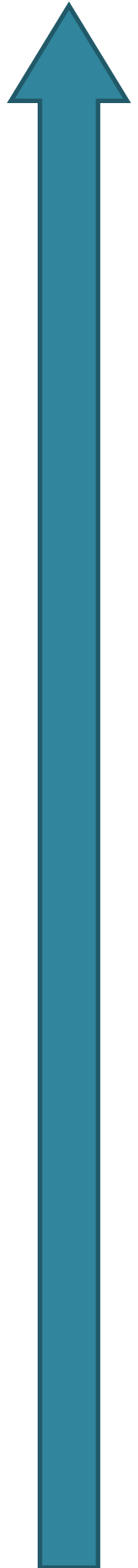
## Things to Consider:

2 Options for conducting student led conference:

1. The teacher personally attends each student/parent conference. This is preferred for the first Student-Led Conference by teachers as well as parents.
2. The teacher schedules 4-5 conferences simultaneously with the teacher moving around the classroom and attending to groups as needed. This is preferred after teachers, students, as well as parents become experienced in the student-Led conference format.

## Resources:

[Student Led Conferences](#)





## Next Steps

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

### Overview:

Consider ways to engage parents in the ILP process and assist their children with the next steps for college and career planning. The two main goals of the Parent/Guardian ILP are to allow parents and guardians to view the work completed by their child and to allow parents and guardians to provide feedback to their child's advisor on their child's ILP. The information entered by students for most sections of the ILP is read-only; parents and guardians can view their child's work but cannot change it.

### Procedures/ Guidelines:

- Include an ongoing feature in your school newsletter on the ILP. For the first issue use “What is the ILP?” This resource includes a brief description of what students can do with the ILP and a summary of features available in the Parent/Guardian ILP. (See Links.)
- Use the hand-outs found in the ILP Parent Toolkit provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (see Links) in orientation meetings and at open houses.
- Post on the school website a link for the video regarding the ILP found in the ILP Parent Toolkit (see Links).
- Schedule a meeting for parents and students together in the computer lab. Have students log on and show their parents what they have done in the ILP. Hand-out parent access cards, and allow time for questions and answers.
- A good time for these meetings is prior to or immediately following another school event (e.g., chorus or band concert, drama presentation, sporting event, orientation) for which parents are already at the school.

Things to Consider:

Share the completion standards for the ILP with parents (link below) to ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements for each year of high school.

Seek upperclassmen or parents of juniors or seniors who might be willing to assist with a parent meeting. Volunteers could also call parents of freshman to ensure they are aware of the ILP.

### Resources:

- [For Parents: What is the ILP?](#)
- [Access Cards for Parents](#)
- [ILP Parent Toolkit](#)
- [Completion Standards](#)





# Where's the Money?

**Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup> Graders & Families

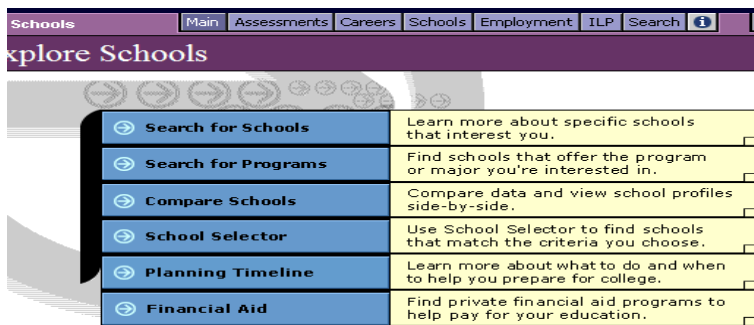
**When:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (During the Year)

## Overview:

Finding scholarships can seem like a daunting experience to both students and parents alike. Starting this process helps to allow families to devote sufficient time to preparing their student. The ILP features over 1500 scholarships for students to research. The good news is that the ILP also features a “Financial Selector” component to help narrow the search.

## Procedures/ Guidelines:

- First, log onto the ILP the click on the blue “schools” button at the top of the screen, next click on the “financial aid” button”



- Students will then answer a series of 22 questions related to their interests, talents and affiliations as well as the affiliations of their parents. Once completed they will receive a list of scholarships for which they are uniquely qualified.
- Students can also search for scholarships by program name using an alphabetical index by clicking on “Financial Aid”, then “Search for Scholarships”

## Things to Consider:

- Consider having students write an essay or letter that is required for one of the scholarships on their list.
- This document can be saved to the “My Documents” section on the homepage of the student ILP.
- When the student is a junior or senior they can re-visit the essay to make revisions and submit to the appropriate scholarship sites

## Resources:

- [Student and Parent ILP Access](#)
- [ILP Parent Toolkit](#)